RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
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CORNUS GLABRATA

BROWN DOGWOOD

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
of the
NATIVE PLANTS OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Ana Cañon, Orange County, California
Established 1927 in Memory of
JOHN W. BIXBY

Number 72 May 19, 1944

CORNUS GLABRATA
BROWN DOGWOOD

Cornaceae Dogwood Family

Deciduous shrub, often 10-20 ft. high, with a broad, rounded crown and many flexible, drooping or pendulous branches which often root when in contact with the ground. Main trunk often 6 in. in diam.; bark of branches reddish-brown, smooth nearly glabrous. Leaves opposite; petioles $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long; blades ovate or oblong, acute at both ends, $1\frac{1}{2}$-4 in. long (largest on vegetative shoots), irregularly-veined, nearly glabrous, bright shiny green above, somewhat so beneath. Flowers in small cymes 1-2 in. across, consisting of 50-75 white flowers; peduncles usually about 1 in. long; unopened flowers about 3/16 in. long, consisting of the green, inferior ovary and the creamy-white corolla; opened flower with 4, narrow, broadly-spreading petals, 4 stamens alternate with petals, bearing 2-celled anthers on long spreading filaments, disc conspicuous at base of the slightly 2-lobed, rather long style; ovary 2-celled; calyx much reduced. Fruit white or usually bluish when mature, about 3/16 in. in diam., with a nearly smooth stone marked with 8 longitudinal lines and containing 2 seeds. Seedlings have foliar cotyledons; next leaves similar to mature ones, but smaller; a fibrous root-system is soon developed and the taproot is surpassed by the other roots. Flowers May and June; fruits August and September.

The genus *Cornus* (from Latin meaning horn, in reference to the hardness of the wood of some species) consists of about 50 species of the temperate regions of the world, of which about 6 kinds are found in California. The name Dogwood is rather generally applied to all species of this genus, but it originated in England where a decoction of the bark of *C. sanguinea* was used to wash mangy dogs. Several of the species native to California are referable to the genus *Svida* which is generally consolidated with *Cornus*. Another species, *C. Nuttallii,* Mountain Dogwood, is an outstanding small tree with showy white bracts, highly colored fall leaves and red fruits. It is sometimes placed in the genus *Cynoxylon.*

Cornus glabrata (Latin meaning smooth or hairless) was described in 1844 by Geo. Bentham (famous English botanist, 1800-84) based upon specimens collected by Hinds in the fall of 1837 in the vicinity of San Francisco while there on a voyage of exploration in the H. M. S. Sulphur. Hinds journeyed inland to parts of what are now Contra Costa Co. and found groves of wild walnuts, possibly at what is now Walnut Creek. It is more than likely that he also got his specimens of Dogwood in the same area and not actually at San Francisco. His name is perpetuated in California botany by *Juglans Hindsii,* named by Prof. Jepson, and by *Salix Hindsiana,* named by Bentham. California has 2 other species of *Cornus* that are somewhat similar to *C. glabrata*: *C. stolonifera,* which is widely distributed in North America, and *C. californica,* confined to California and Oregon, have leaves more conspicuously veined, lighter beneath and pubescent, and fruits generally white. *C. costulata* was described in 1911 by Prof. Jepson, based upon specimens collected

by Goddard in northeastern Mendocino Co., and characterized by ribs on the stone of the fruit, but he now considers it merely a variant of *C. glabrata* (Jepson, Flora of Calif. **2**: 679. 1936). Millspaugh and Nuttall in their Flora of Santa Catalina Island (1923) described a Dogwood under the name of *Svida catalinensis,* but recent botanists have considered it as typical *C. glabrata.*

The English name, Brown Dogwood, is sometimes given in literature for *C. glabrata,* apparently because of the reddish-brown stems, but it is extremely doubtful if any name other than Dogwood is used to any extent in California, for few people have ever consciously seen it, let alone know it by any name. It is widespread at low elevations (to 4000 ft.) in the Sierra Nevada foothills and in the Coast Ranges, and extends from southern Oregon to southern California. It is confined to moist stream beds or similar situations and is often thus locally abundant, but it is rare in southern California, largely because of the few suitable moist habitats. Large plants are sometimes over 20 ft. high, have a similar spread, a main trunk of 6 in. diam. and many pendulous branches, some of which root upon touching the ground and thus form thickets. The glossy, bright green leaves appear from February to March, while the flowers are produced mainly in May, and, although small, make a considerable display. The bluish or nearly white fruits ripen in August and September, but are abundant only occasionally, at which times they are highly ornamental. For several months during the fall the foliage is as attractive for its reddish hues as it was earlier in the season for its clean green color. Finally when the leaves are all shed in November and December, the reddish-brown branches are exposed and lend color to the stream beds.

We have propagated *Cornus glabrata* since 1931 when we collected seeds and small rooted suckers from plants growing in creek bottoms near Stanford University. The following year rooted suckers were obtained on Santa Catalina Isl. (this the plant named *Svida catalinensis*). Propagation from suckers and seeds offered no difficulties. Seeds planted in flats in November, 1931 germinated readily and by the following July the seedlings were about 6 in. high and had good fibrous root systems. Most of these plants were set out in February, 1933, or about 14 months after the seeds were planted. Many of these are now over 6 ft. high and have a much greater spread. The most interesting, as well as most natural appearing, planting is in the bottom of the small canyon to the southwest of the Administration Building. Plants scattered along its bottom for nearly 300 ft. have now taken complete possession of the area beneath California Sycamores, and have made it one of the most inviting spots in the entire Garden.

Cornus glabrata is a fine, deciduous, large shrub for shady or even sunny situations provided it is supplied with adequate water. Its graceful branches covered with soft green leaves throughout the summer and its reddish stems in winter are almost equally attractive. It is a pleasure to suggest the use of a California native shrub that will thrive in almost any soil and can be watered freely without fear of losing it from fungi attacking the roots.

CARL B. WOLF

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

Dedication of Garden Foundation to the Board of Trustees for the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden of the Native Plants of California:

"THE NATURE, OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF THE INSTITUTION HEREBY FOUNDED AND TO BE MAINTAINED HEREUNDER.

ITS NATURE: A botanic garden of the native plants of California, herbarium and botanical library, containing living and/or preserved specimens of trees, plants and flowers native to California, and literature relating thereto.

ITS OBJECT: The preservation and improvement of the property now transferred and such property as may hereafter be transferred to the Trustees for those who not only wish to enjoy, but to study, assembled in one accessible locality, native California plants; and for the advancement of science and education with reference to plant life indigenous to the State of California.

ITS PURPOSES: (a) An institution founded primarily for scientific research in the field of local botany.

(b) To preserve the native California flora, try to replenish the depleted supply of some of the rarest plants which are rapidly being exterminated, and bring together in a comparatively small area as complete a collection of the rich store of native California plants as can be grown in this southern section of the state, thereby promoting the general welfare of the people of the state by providing the means for encouraging and carrying on the above mentioned activities in said state and by doing such other things as may be necessary and desirable to carry out the objects hereof."

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